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# Marketing AMS Activities

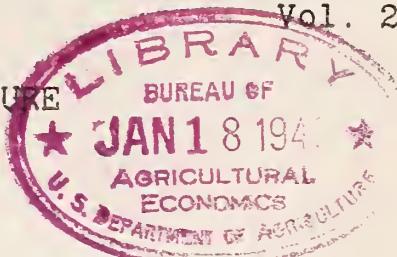
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WHEAT YIELDS AND SOIL MOISTURE  
By R. K. Smith



Winter wheat farmers in the Western Great Plains region are worried about yield prospects for next year. In Kansas, the Nation's leading wheat-producing State, Weather Bureau records show that rainfall during September, October, and November was the lightest of record. Conditions in nearby States were almost as bad. A dry layer of top soil over wide areas prevented germination, or sprouting, and seeding was delayed as farmers waited for rain. Wheat in the entire western Great Plains region entered the winter in extremely poor condition.

Experiment station records in this important wheat-producing section show that depth of soil moisture at seeding time is closely correlated with abandonment and per-acre yields. When little or no rainfall occurs soon after wheat has been planted, or when soil moisture is only a few inches deep, the probability of poor yields, or crop failure, is greatly increased. If dry weather continues through the winter, the probability of failure is so great that heavy abandonment of the crop usually occurs.

## Tests Started in 1938

It is important, of course, to know that soil moisture at seeding time has a material effect on abandonment and per-acre yields. But it is more important to know approximately how much wheat yields are affected by moisture conditions. A systematic attempt to make this determination was begun in Kansas and Nebraska in 1938 by crop statisticians of the Agricultural Marketing Service.

In the conduct of this study, routes were laid out covering approximately 7,000 miles in the two States. The same routes are followed each year. Two tests per year are made; one shortly after the wheat is seeded in the fall, and the other after growth is resumed in the spring. Since it is impractical to test every field, the crop statistician takes a "sample"; that is, he tests fields at regular intervals. The tests are made to a depth of 4 feet, using standard soil tubes. For each test a record is made of the depth of dry and moist soil, the classification of the soil at different depths, and the name of the preceding crop is recorded on the fall survey. The statisticians also note the "percent stand", or germination, condition, and other pertinent factors.

In Kansas, the 1939 fall moisture tests were made during the period October 17 to October 27. A 3,500-mile route was taken, covering the western two-thirds of the State. The results of the survey showed the effects of dry weather during the autumn months. Soil moisture, on the average, lacked 2 inches of reaching the depth shown by the 1938 fall survey.

The Nebraska tests were made during the last week of October and the first week of November. As in Kansas, the survey covered about 3,500 miles. The statisticians found that soil moisture conditions in Nebraska were even poorer than in Kansas. The average depth reached by moisture this fall lacked 8 inches of reaching the depth penetrated in 1938.

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#### Immediate Forecast of Effects Inadvisable

What effect will this soil moisture deficiency have upon 1940 wheat yields? With data available for only 2 years, it is impossible to make a reliable forecast at this time. But it is hoped that sufficient information may be available within a few years to predict, with fair accuracy, the effect of this particular factor upon final yields. In the meantime, statisticians will watch this experiment with a great deal of interest. If the results prove of practical value, efforts will be made to extend the project to other States.

(Editor's Note: Mr. Smith is senior agricultural statistician, in charge of grain crop production estimates for the Agricultural Marketing Service. He has played a prominent part in conducting the soil moisture experiment.)

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Heavier yields of popcorn in 1939 more than offset a decrease in acreage, the Agricultural Marketing Service states in its annual popcorn production report. Production in the principal producing States is estimated to be 84,087,000 pounds of ear corn--an increase of 4 percent over the 1938 production of 80,598,000 pounds.

NEW YORK AND CHICAGO FRUIT  
AND VEGETABLE PRICES ANALYZED

. . . . . By J. W. Park

New York and Chicago are the leading centers of fruit and vegetable consumption and distribution. About 22 percent of the United States rail and boat shipments in 1938 were unloaded in these two huge markets. The domestic rail and boat unloads in New York totaled 122,000 carloads, and in Chicago, 63,000 carloads. Imports in the two cities totaled about 28,000 carloads. In addition, immense quantities were received by truck.

New York City, because of its size and location, dominates the markets in the heavily populated Middle Atlantic and New England States. In 1938, fruits and vegetables were received from 42 States and from 33 countries and insular possessions. Chicago, the leading and representative market in the Middle West, received supplies from 46 States, and imports from 9 countries and insular possessions.

Wholesale fruit and vegetable prices in these two key markets are fairly reliable indicators of prices in other principal markets of the United States. For this reason, the Agricultural Marketing Service tabulates daily wholesale prices of all fruits and vegetables included in its market news reports for these two cities, and computes weekly and monthly averages. Prices of about 60 commodities are tabulated, though the number varies somewhat from month to month. For each commodity, prices are listed by leading States or districts of origin, by varieties or types, by containers, and by sizes. The prices generally refer to stock of good merchantable quality and condition--in less-than-carlot wholesale lots.

Report Being Prepared

A report showing monthly average unweighted prices for the calendar year 1939 is now in preparation. Similar prices are tabulated in leading producing districts, and these will also be included in the 1939 report. Such a record has a number of uses and is expected to be in great demand by growers, shippers, and dealers, in addition to furnishing the basis for various types of market and price research.

The Weighting Problem

An interesting problem relating to tabulating and averaging market news prices which has been widely discussed is how to arrive at a weighted average price for the entire supply of a commodity, or for the entire supply which is of good quality and condition. Since the market news reports cannot include specific data on the proportion of the supply by varieties, sizes, grades, condition, and containers, it is impossible to get a weighted average price for the entire supply of a certain product without information in addition to that currently available.

Studies have been made in which the market news reporters in certain cities have estimated for each of a number of commodities the approximate proportion of the supply by variety, grade, and size, and thus it has been possible to arrive at an approximate weighted averages computed by using the low and high prices of stock of good merchantable quality and condition and for all varieties and districts of origin.

An unweighted weekly or monthly average price of a product obtained by using the midpoint of the daily price range of good quality stock of all varieties, sizes, and origins in a certain container, is open to criticism if used as an average price., n many instances, however, it does in practice approximate the weighted average. When a small part of the supply is comprised of a variety or size which is very high or very low in price, it is necessary to make adjustments in order to arrive at an unweighted average price which is satisfactory in indicating a trend, or for other statistical uses.

#### Daily Supply Figures Incomplete

Investigations also have been made of the possibility of weighting daily prices by daily supplies in computing weekly and monthly averages. The available daily supply figures, however, are only approximate since truck receipt information is not complete, and quantities per carload vary considerably. Moreover, the market news service reports cars as unloaded on the day the last package is removed, and part of the carload may have been sold on preceding days. Considerable quantities are at times held over in jobbers' stores from day to day. It has been found that in most instances there is very little difference between an unweighted weekly or monthly average and an average weighted by available figures on daily supply.

Wholesale price trends during a season for any commodity are usually similar in New York, Chicago, and other large markets. Day-to day or short-time trends may vary considerably among the markets owing to differences in supply or other local conditions. Wholesale prices of far western products in New York are frequently higher than in Chicago, the premium often approximating the difference in transportation charges. On the other hand, prices of eastern and southeastern products are often higher in Chicago.

(Editor's Note: Mr. Park is agricultural economist for the Agricultural Marketing Service. He is conducting a number of studies pertaining to the marketing of fruits and vegetables.)

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Reports received from California canners by the Agricultural Marketing Service show intentions to contract a total of 11,520 acres of spinach for canning or processing in 1940. This intended planting compares with 8,120 acres in 1939, and is the largest acreage in the State since 1937.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
MAKES ITS FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

The service and regulatory work of the Agricultural Marketing Service is described in the first annual report of C. W. Kitchen, Chief. Complex problems of modern-day agriculture, Mr. Kitchen says, are found in the field of marketing and distribution. In this connection, he points out that more attention than ever before is being focused on methods of reducing the margin between what the grower receives and what the consumer pays. Greater effort is being devoted to more efficient methods of grading, packing, packaging, and shipping, in order that waste may be lessened, quality of products reaching consumers improved, and costs of marketing reduced.

Kitchen stresses the need for basic economic data in the intelligent appraisal of supply and demand factors, and in the formulation of production and marketing plans and programs. Estimates of acreage, yield, production, and value of practically all crops grown in the United States are made through the cooperation of some 200,000 voluntary crop reporters, most of them farmers. The reporters also provide information on the movement, utilization, and stocks of various farm products, on prices received and prices paid by farmers, and on wages and employment of farm labor. New crop estimating techniques were developed during the past year. A preharvest wheat survey was inaugurated for the purpose of indicating the quality of the new crop before much of it leaves the producers' hands. New formulas are being perfected for considering the effects of weather, soil moisture, and other factors on crop yields.

Market News Work Described

The report shows how the country is blanketed by a nation-wide market news service. A leased wire system connects the major markets, producing sections, and shipping points. The information collected at these points is distributed by means of radio, press, telephone, and mail. Farm product market information is now being disseminated one or more times daily over nearly half of the radio stations operating in the United States. The opening of livestock market reporting offices at Thomasville, Ga., Montgomery, Ala., and Houston, Texas, the past year increases the number of field offices covering these commodities to 32 over the entire country.

A number of new standards were established the past year. A simplified terminology for consumers is used in defining the new standards recently adopted for carcass beef. Revised standards of quality for creamery butter were put in effect. A revival in the production of Sea Island cotton necessitated the adoption of 11 new grades for this type.

The report shows how widely the inspection, grading and classification service is used. The tonnage of meat graded during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1939, for example, increased 10 percent over that

of the previous year. Of the 321 million pounds of butter officially graded, more than 90 million pounds were sold in consumer packages containing a certificate of quality. Approximately 30 million pounds of dressed poultry were graded, and 48 million pounds were inspected for condition and wholesomeness. More than half a million cars of fresh fruits and vegetables were officially inspected during the year. Over 653,000 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables were inspected at canneries for the purpose of establishing the grade under contracts between growers and canners. And official grain inspections represented a total of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  billion bushels.

#### Education and Demonstration

That standardization and inspection services are becoming more widely used is partly attributed to the educational and demonstrational programs conducted in cooperation with State agencies. At meetings attended by thousands of farmers, dealers, and consumers, it was shown how standardization and inspection, while increasing returns to producers, give the consumer a better-quality product for the price paid. Grain grading demonstrations the past year were attended by more than 10,000 persons. Over 53,000 persons were shown better methods of preparing tobacco for market.

To maintain workable standards for measuring quality, increased emphasis is being placed on standardization research. Laboratories are maintained in Washington and in the field to improve cotton standards and to develop better quality in raw and manufactured cotton. Some 20,000 physical and chemical tests were made on grains, partly for the purpose of improving inspection techniques. Cooperative research in meat quality continues, and comprehensive tests relate to wool shrinkage.

Mr. Kitchen's report also shows how various Acts of Congress, designed to maintain merchandising ethics, were administered during the year. Numerous cases of unfair and deceptive practices were discovered and corrected in the administration of the Packers and Stockyards Act. Approximately 20,000 commission merchants, dealers, and brokers in fruits and vegetables operated under Federal licenses required under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. And a highwater mark was set in the volume of commodities that could be stored in warehouses licensed under the U. S. Warehouse Act. The activities of the Service include the administration of 17 specific statutes.

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#### OREGON STANDARDS

CONFORM TO FEDERAL

Oregon standards for grades of onions, carrots, watermelons, grapes, cauliflower, and celery have been changed to conform to standards promulgated for these commodities by the Agricultural Marketing Service.

Dr. A. G. BLACK NEW  
HEAD OF FARM CREDIT

Dr. A. G. Black, formerly Director of Marketing and Regulatory Work for the Department of Agriculture, is now in charge of the Farm Credit Administration as Acting Governor. The appointment was announced in late December by Secretary of Agriculture H. A. Wallace, to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of F. F. Hill as Governor, on December 20, 1939.

Farm credit work is not new to Dr. Black. He was connected with the Federal Farm Loan Bureau as agricultural economist from 1921 to 1922. From 1922 to 1924 he was with the Dayton, Ohio, Joint Stock Land Bank. He taught economics at the University of Minnesota from 1924 to 1929. Later in 1929 he became head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Iowa State College. Called to Washington in 1933 to assist with the inauguration of the national farm adjustment programs, Dr. Black was in charge of the livestock and feed grain activities of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration until June 1935 when he was designated Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. In October 1938 he was appointed Director of Marketing and Regulatory Work.

The Farm Credit Administration came under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture on July 1, 1939, under Reorganization Plan I.

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SEED ACT REGULATIONS  
ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Copies of the rules and regulations for the enforcement of the new Federal Seed Act are now available, the Agricultural Marketing Service announced recently. Preparations are under way for a more detailed explanation so that all interested persons may easily understand the requirements of the Act.

Promulgation of the rules and regulations followed their consideration by U. S. Department of Agriculture officials, State seed officials, seedsmen, and representatives of consumer and producer organizations. Proposed regulations were discussed at conferences held in early November 1939, at San Francisco and Kansas City and at a formal hearing held in Washington, D. C., November 27.

Commenting on the regulations, Mr. C. W. Kitchen, Chief of the Service, had this to say: "It was impossible to include in the regulations all of the many suggestions received, because of the necessity for considering the best interests of all individuals concerned. The Act is expected to be far-reaching in extending protection to users and handlers of seeds. And it will be our desire in administering the Act to develop a practicable application of its intent."

IDaho SUPERVISING INSPECTOR  
CLEARED OF CHARGES BY SURVEY

Mr. L. G. Schultz, supervisor of Federal-State inspection of fruits and vegetables in Idaho, has been cleared of charges that his work was unsatisfactory. The results of an investigation conducted last fall, and published in December by the Agricultural Marketing Service, showed that relieving Schultz of his Idaho assignment, as urged by some Idaho interests, was not warranted by the facts. The investigation involved interviews with a large number of fruit and vegetable growers and shippers in all parts of the State. Of the persons interviewed, almost 74 percent, representing about 91 percent of the total volume of produce handled by those surveyed, favored the retention of Schultz.

The Federal-State inspection of fruits and vegetables in Idaho is conducted under a cooperative agreement between the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Marketing Service. The first agreement of this kind became effective August 15, 1922, and Mr. L. G. Schultz has been in charge of the supervisory work for the Federal Department since that time. Early in 1939, however, a joint resolution was adopted by the Idaho State Legislature requesting changes in the cooperative inspection agreement and the transfer of Mr. Schultz from the State. As a result of this action by the Idaho Legislature, certain revisions were made in the cooperative agreement.

Sometime later, Mr. E. N. Pettygrove, Idaho Commissioner of Agriculture, reported that various complaints regarding the work of Mr. Schultz had been received. These complaints alleged that he was arbitrary and noncooperative; that the inspectors were not uniform in their interpretations of the standards, and sometimes were biased in favor of the shippers. Inasmuch as the complaints reported had included a request for the removal of Schultz, an investigation was mutually agreed upon by the two agencies involved--the Idaho Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Marketing Service. The investigation, which cleared Mr. Schultz, brought out that much of the trouble was due to a misunderstanding of the dual activities of the inspectors. As representatives of the Federal-State inspection service, their work is of a permissive nature. But as representatives of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, they are charged with enforcing various State compulsory shipping regulations.

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Movement of 1939 crop alfalfa seed from farms this year has been at about the usual rate. Up to December 5, slightly more than 70 percent of the 1939 crop had been sold by growers. Movement has been fastest in Oklahoma, Kansas, and North Dakota, and has been slowest in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, where only 50 to 55 percent of the crop had left the hands of growers.

## SOME CONTAINERS STANDARDIZED

. . . . . By L. C. Carey

More than a million carloads of fruits and vegetables are shipped annually in this country. Moving to market by railroad, motortruck, and by steamboat, probably 85 to 90 percent is packed in some kind of container. More than a billion packages are required, representing an investment of several million dollars. In the orderly marketing of fruits and vegetables the containers used play an important part since they constitute one of the factors upon which prices are based.

Prior to the passage of the Standard Container Acts of 1916 and 1928, much confusion prevailed in the marketing of fruits and vegetables because of the many packages used by shippers in various parts of the country. Both the package manufacturers and members of the fruit and vegetable industry urged the elimination of many packages by legalizing only those which were deemed necessary in the marketing of these commodities.

The Act of 1916 fixes the sizes for Climax baskets and containers for small fruits and vegetables, while the Act of 1928 standardizes hampers, round stave, and splint baskets. The objectives of these two Acts are: (1) to afford protection to the buying public by outlawing short measure containers; (2) to reduce manufacturing costs by eliminating numerous odd sizes and shapes; (3) to form a more accurate and definite basis for market quotations by providing standard units of sale, and (4) to do away with unfair competition which the grower who uses full capacity containers must meet from users of short containers.

Container Acts Effective

Enforcement of these Acts has reduced the number of sizes of berry boxes from approximately 18 to 3, till baskets from 30 to 5, Climax baskets from 31 to 4, hampers from 42 to 9, splint baskets from 25 to 6, and round stave baskets from 20 to 9. The fruit and vegetable markets are no longer cluttered with the multiplicity of odd sizes and shapes of containers of these types which formerly contributed to confusion and deception.

But most fruits and vegetables are packed in containers for which no such standards have been established--in crates, boxes, cartons, drums, and sacks. It is generally believed that the principle of standardization could be applied to all containers. This belief is based upon the success which has attended the administration of the Standard Container Acts of 1916 and 1928. "Snide" packages of the basket and hamper type are rarely manufactured deliberately. Baskets and hampers are manufactured by some 360 firms throughout the country and they comply with the precise measurements of the standards remarkably well. But a great deal of vigilance is required to maintain the standards, and the problem is complicated by the seasonal character of the industry.

Container Manufacture Seasonal

Factories which operate continuously the year round are exceptions; operations are mostly geared to the probable demand. To some extent, each factory season involves a new set of factors--new help, new machines, and perhaps some change in the style of the package or the method of making it. To a larger extent than is generally realized, the manufacture of baskets, from the preparation of the flat stock to final assembly is individualistic. The industry has no standards of quality, no generally recognized code of standard manufacturing practices, no catalog of standard forms, machines, or equipment. But baskets must be made available to growers at the lowest possible cost. Under such conditions it is always a question as to whether the finished product complies with the Federal requirements.

In the enforcement of the Standard Container Acts, the Agricultural Marketing Service has recognized these special manufacturing conditions. It has adopted the policy of rendering the maximum possible service to manufacturers in preventing the production of unlawful containers. By limiting the number of lawful sizes of baskets, the Standard Container Acts greatly simplified that particular problem for manufacturers. They now wholeheartedly endorse the principle and co-operate with the Department of Agriculture in the maintenance of the standards.

The Agricultural Marketing Service maintains a laboratory in Washington to which manufacturers may submit samples for examination at any time during the year. Last year 495 lots of samples were tested at Washington. To insure a more complete coverage of the industry, however, a major portion of the testing in recent years has been done at the factories by traveling examiners.

Few Violations Found

During the last fiscal year, tests were made either in Washington or in the field for 287, or 80 percent, of the 360 active factories. Examinations were made of 1,054 or 83 percent, of the 1,804 items which these factories ordinarily make. In 871 instances the containers were found to be entirely satisfactory on first test. In 183 instances the containers were not entirely within the established tolerances, but positive correction was accomplished in 65 of these cases. At the close of the year 932 items, or 88 percent, of current production were being made in strict compliance with the Federal requirements.

In a few instances, however, disciplinary measures were necessary. Two lots of hampers which were excessively oversize were voluntarily destroyed by the manufacturers. One lot of undersize round stave bushel baskets was disposed of at a sacrifice for purposes other than for fruits and vegetables. Another lot of undersize bushels, comprising some 50,000 baskets, was placed under detention for correction. These violations were discovered through factory tests.

Prior to 1936, all tests were made volumetrically in the Washington laboratory. Since that time the tests have been made by a wider

use of the dimensional method. As developed for this work, the dimensional method is based on inside measurements for each of the several standard sizes and types of containers. These are arranged in some 22 schedules according to type. Besides furnishing the manufacturer with a method of testing he can apply himself, the standard specifications employed in this method tends to supply the industry with a code of standard manufacturing practices which may conceivably result in greater uniformity of package design and construction.

(Editor's Note: Mr. Carey, marketing specialist, has immediate charge of the administration of the Standard Container Acts for the Agricultural Marketing Service.)

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#### SMALL TO HEAD CHICAGO POULTRY AND DAIRY OFFICE FOR THE A.M.S.

Edward Small, in charge of technical supervision of dairy products standardization for the Agricultural Marketing Service, has been named in charge of the dairy and poultry products branch office at Chicago. He took over his new duties January 1. Small succeeded G. W. Sprague who is now associated with the Division of Cooperative Research and Service of the Farm Credit Administration.

Mr. Small is widely known to members of the dairy and poultry industry through his work in connection with revision of the U. S. standards for quality of creamery butter and with the technical supervision of the butter grading work. Entering the Federal service in August 1927, he was assistant in the Chicago office for nearly 3 years. He was later stationed at Philadelphia and more recently at Washington, D. C.

Coincident with the transfer of Mr. Small to Chicago, Bruce S. Mars has been transferred from Chicago to New York City. Mr. Mars is now in charge of the regional supervision of dairy and poultry products grading in the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington offices, a capacity similar to that in which he served at Chicago the past 2 years. His duties in the East also include the technical supervision of poultry and poultry products grading. Mr. Mars came with the Department in June 1925, but was employed in butter grading and administrative work with commercial firms from June 1927 to November 1936.

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Either the British Ministry of Food will be compelled to make substantial purchases of American dried fruit in the near future, or British dried fruit consumption will have to be curtailed sharply, according to a recent dispatch received in the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations from the American Agricultural Attaché in London.

NEW JERSEY GROWERS AND DEALERS  
TRY NEW APPLE MARKETING PLAN

Higher quality fruit is expected to be made available to consumers at no increase in cost as one result of a recent marketing experiment launched in New Jersey. Essentially a move designed to shorten the road between the farmer and consumer, the project calls for direct shipment of apples from growers to 108 retail stores in Camden, test city for the experiment.

The grower-retailer plan of cooperation represents an effort to boost apple consumption by offering higher quality fruit at no advance in price. Direct shipments from farm to retail stores are expected to reduce impairment of quality resulting from delays in delivery and repeated handling. The experiment is being conducted under the auspices of the New Jersey Fruit Institute, a growers' organization, in cooperation with retail stores, the State Agricultural Extension Service of Rutgers University, and the State Department of Agriculture.

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TOBACCO MARKET NEWS  
SERVICE EXTENDED

The Agricultural Marketing Service has recently completed arrangements for strengthening its market news service on tobacco in West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri. The rapid growth of tobacco inspection at auction markets the past 2 years has been accompanied by an increasing number of requests for more complete and timely market news reports.

At Huntington, W. Va., price reports on Burley tobacco sold on the auction market will be issued each afternoon covering the current day's sales, under cooperative arrangements with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. The reports will be disseminated by press and radio, and mimeographed copies will be distributed to growers patronizing the following day's sale.

At Louisville, Ky., weekly tobacco reports will be supplied to the United Press, which will carry them to radio stations in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia, and also to newspapers in those States. As was the case last year, these reports will be carried by the United Press from Atlanta to radio stations in the Southeast.

A daily tobacco report covering sales at Weston, Mo., is now being released. The information, telephoned late in the afternoon by the sales companies, is summarized and broadcast at 6 P.M. over a Kansas City station. This report is also carried to other radio stations and newspapers in that producing area by the Associated Press.

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## THE 1940 TRUCK CROP NEWS PROGRAM

. . . . . By Reginald Royston

The labels on vegetable containers at any large city market show the competitive character of the truck crop industry. Storage cabbage from New York vies for consumer favor with new cabbage from Texas. Potatoes from Idaho are displayed on the same counter with potatoes from Maine. And lettuce from the Imperial Valley of California faces the competition of that grown in the Salt River Valley of Arizona. This intense competition between producing areas and a rapidly increasing production have led to insistent requests for information regarding the plans and operations of "the other fellow."

During the past 3 months considerable progress has been made toward formulating a more practical and timely program of truck crop estimates and news reports. State statisticians, leading growers, and State marketing officials were consulted to determine the individual needs of certain States. The enlarged program of reports, which went into effect January 1, grew out of these conferences.

Under this program, semi-monthly truck crop news releases and flash, or "spot" news reports, cover all important areas in each State. The semi-monthly reports emphasize news items pertaining to time of planting, acreage changes, progress of the crops during the growing season, probable time of harvest, time of peak shipments, rate of harvest and flow to market, quality of the crops, relative importance of rail and truck shipments, and related matters. Flash news reports relate to sudden damage to the crops from frosts, freezes, storms, and devastations of insects and disease. Information of this kind, when made quickly available for competing States, and for specific areas within States, is expected to prove extremely valuable to growers and distributors in their marketing operations.

News Promptly Disseminated

The information contained in the semi-monthly news summaries now reaches the growers and the trade within a few days after it is collected. Reports relating to the first of the month are released about the nineteenth. The releases are made from Washington and the State offices of the Crop Reporting Board on the same day. These release dates do not apply to official estimates of acreage and production.

In the release of these reports, every available facility is used to bring about prompt distribution. A mimeographed report, summarizing by crops the recent developments in each State, is mailed from the Washington office twice a month to an extensive list. Excerpts of the summary are also sent out over the leased wire system for prompt distribution by the market news offices. State Crop reporting offices release the report in mimeographed form to all truck crop mailing lists. An exception is made in New Jersey where the truck crop news notes are incorporated in the weekly news letter of the State Bureau of Markets. It is possible that this arrangement may also be developed in other States where Marketing Bureaus release daily or weekly information on fruits and vegetables.

In New York, the State Market News Service broadcasts the summary over several radio stations. In Virginia, a Norfolk station probably will give 10 or 15 minutes twice a month to the broadcasting of truck crop news notes. At New Orleans, where the market specialist broadcasts daily market news information, the highlights of the State truck crop summaries are included in his broadcasts. Other States are expected to make similar arrangements.

### Information Exchanged

Various State offices of the Federal crop reporting service have arranged, or are planning to arrange, for a direct exchange of information on competing crops. The basic crop data is obtained by statisticians through field travel, by "contacts" with key growers and others, and from information furnished by representatives of the market news service. The trading of information is handled directly by the State offices concerned, and this news is incorporated in the State truck crop releases. California growers, for example, may want news of the green pea crop in Mississippi; New York growers may be interested in Texas cabbage or the Michigan onion crop. These up-to-date news items exchanged among the States are included in the semi-monthly truck crop news summaries issued from each State crop reporting office.

Sudden damage from crop hazards such as frosts, freezes, floods, and high temperature has an immediate effect on prices received by growers. The industry needs reliable reports of such damage, for too often trade rumors are the only source of information. Since reports on the effects of such damage obviously cannot be delayed until the release of the semi-monthly report, statisticians wire an immediate report to the Washington office, even though little or no loss is expected. This preliminary wire informs the Washington office of the unusual development and perhaps gives the probable range of the damage. These "spot" news items are sent by leased wire to all parts of the country. At the same time, the news is released by the State offices to local agencies, growers, distributors, and other interested parties. It is intended that "spot" news shall cover fruit crops as well as vegetable crops.

Acreage and production estimates are least affected by the new program. It is proposed to release the truck crop estimates about 2 days earlier than the release dates scheduled last year. In addition, an extra midseason forecast of production will be scheduled for a few crops.

(Editor's Note: Mr. Royston is senior agricultural statistician for the Agricultural Marketing Service. He is in charge of fruit and truck crop production statistics.)

Iowa corn yields in 1939 are the largest of record -- 52 bushels per acre.

## CRANBERRY GROWING NOW BIG BUSINESS

Seventy years ago cranberry growing was looked upon as a gamble, Howe Bancroft writes in the Agricultural Situation. Now it is a \$5,000,000 industry with production in 1939 estimated at 668,000 barrels. Massachusetts leads in 1939 production followed by Wisconsin, New Jersey, Washington, and Oregon.

The early pilgrims found cranberries growing wild in the bogs of Massachusetts, but no effort was made to commercialize production until about 1850. Cultural practices were then developed, varieties were improved, and yields per acre were increased. For years, the berries were marketed fresh largely for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Canning processes were then developed. Now the berries are marketed fresh or processed practically the year round.

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## CERTIFIED SEED POTATO CROP NEXT TO LARGEST OF RECORD

The 1939 crop of certified seed potatoes was next to the largest of record and totaled 13,798,000 bushels a recent report of the Agricultural Marketing Service states. This figure is based on information from certifying agencies in 26 States. The record crop was grown in 1937 when 15,485,000 bushels were certified. The 1938 crop of 11,262,000 bushels was slightly below average.

The Irish Cobbler proved the most popular. The figures show that about 30 percent of the total certified in 1939 was of this variety. Green Mountain was next with 21 percent, followed by Bliss Triumph with 19 percent. Other varieties, with the percentage certified, were as follows: Katahdin, 6 percent; Chippewa, 5 percent; White Rose, 4 percent; Netted Gem, 3 percent; and all others, 12 percent.

Though the older varieties are still finding favor with growers, some new varieties made rapid gains last year. The largest increases over a year ago in the quantities certified were reported for Chippewa, White Rose, and Katahdin. The Chippewa and Katahdin varieties are tending to replace Bliss Triumph in the southern commercial early sections.

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## SOYBEAN PRODUCTION INCREASING RAPIDLY

Production of soybeans has been increasing rapidly for some years, the Crop Reporting Board of the Department of Agriculture states. In 1939 the crop showed a further increase in the acreage harvested for beans--the increase being more than one-third over that of 1938. With record yields, production was over 87 million bushels, or about 2,600,000 tons. These soybeans are being used largely for crushing, partially as a substitute for cottonseed.

-- PERTAINING TO MARKETING --

The following reports, touching upon some phase of marketing work, were released by the Agricultural Marketing Service during December. Copies may be obtained upon request.

TOBACCO INSPECTION SERVICE IN RELATION TO  
IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AUCTION MARKETING SYSTEM  
By Charles E. Gage

"The Federal tobacco inspection service may be the key to unlock some of the marketing problems that pertain to the auction system, and it indicates that the unlocking process is already under way."

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MARKETING TEXAS CITRUS  
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS  
SUMMARY OF THE 1938-39 SEASON

By R. E. Winfrey

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NATURE AND SCOPE  
OF COTTON FIBER, GINNING AND SPINNING RESEARCHES

By Robert W. Webb

"In cotton breeding, ginning, and the development and improvement of marketing methods, much emphasis has been given to quality. To measure quality, however, certain standards are required by means of which the elements in quality may be compared and evaluated."

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PRELIMINARY REPORT OF COTTON SPINNING  
AND RELATED FIBER STUDIES  
IN CONNECTION WITH THE REGIONAL VARIETY SERIES  
CROPS OF 1935 AND 1936

By Malcolm E. Campbell

The regional variety studies of cotton have constituted an important section of the cotton quality investigations conducted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the last few years. This paper is a brief progress report of the work done so far.

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LETTUCE FROM FIELD TO TABLE

A broadcast tracing the marketing of lettuce from the field in California to the table in New York City. Broadcast Wednesday, November 29, 1939, during the Department of Agriculture portion, National Farm and Home Hour.

**OUR CONTRIBUTORS  
THE PAST "YEAR"**

With the January issue, the "new" Marketing Activities begins its second year. Volume 1 contained only 6 issues, inasmuch as the Agricultural Marketing Service was formally established only 6 months ago--July 1, 1939.

The following is a list of the special articles that appeared in Marketing Activities from July to December, 1939, inclusive:

July

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE COVERS BROAD FIELD OF ACTIVITIES . . . . .	C. W. Kitchen
MORE ADEQUATE, UNIFORM STATISTICS SOUGHT ON CITY MILK CONSUMPTION . . . . .	J. B. Shepard
LIVESTOCK MARKETING CHANGES ALTER MARKET NEWS REPORTING METHODS . . . . .	W. O. Fraser
INNOVATIONS IN CROP REPORTING . . . . .	C. W. Sarle

August

BEEF NOW GRADED ON REVISED STANDARDS . . . . .	W. O. Fraser
COTTON AREAS SHOW INTEREST IN HANDLING AND GINNING . . . . .	R. W. Webb
MARYLAND TOBACCO AUCTIONS MAY HELP TO RECOVER TRADE . . . . .	J. V. Morrow
APPROVALS FOR FREE CLASSIFICATION OF 1939 COTTON PASS LAST YEAR'S TOTAL . . . . .	W. B. Lanham

September

SHIPPING POINT INSPECTIONS SHOW FURTHER GAINS IN 1938-39 . . . . .	F. G. Robb
GRAIN DEALERS AND FARMERS GO TO SCHOOL . . . . .	W. B. Combs
NEW BASIS FOR SPOT COTTON QUOTATIONS . . . . .	M. M. Stewart, Jr.
A BILLION DOLLARS FROM POULTRY AND EGGS . . . . .	S. A. Jones
MOISTURE CONTENT OF ROUGH RICE A MARKETING FACTOR . . . . .	W. D. Smith

October

A WEEKLY BUTTER PRODUCTION REPORT . . . . .	B. H. Bennett
PROPER PREPARATION OF TURKEYS FOR MARKET ESSENTIAL . . . . .	Roy C. Potts
1939 HONEY SEASON DISAPPOINTS BEEKEEPERS . . . . .	Harold J. Clay
PACA BENEFITS GO BEYOND SECRETARY'S DECISIONS . . . . .	H. A. Spilman
THE TURKEY GRADING SERVICE . . . . .	T. W. Heitz
NEW RADIO SERVICE WELL RECEIVED BY FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS . . . . .	E. J. Rowell

November

HOW TO BUY A TURKEY . . . . .	Rob R. Slocum
THE COMMON CARRIERS COOPERATE WITH THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE . . . . .	Jas. G. Cross
COLD STORAGE REPORTING IS EXPANDED . . . . .	William Broxton
GOVERNMENT GRADED BUTTER PROVIDES GREATER ASSURANCE OF QUALITY TO CONSUMERS . . . . .	Roy C. Potts

December

TURKEY PRODUCTION TREND UPWARD . . . . .	S. A. Jones
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MARKETING OFFI- CIALS HOLDS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN FLORIDA . . . . .	(as reported by J. R. Cavanagh)

Glancing down the list of titles one can easily agree with the thought expressed by the first--Agricultural Marketing Service covers a broad field of activities. The timely informative articles of our contributors have brought about a wider knowledge of the work of this new Bureau. During the coming year we are looking forward to seeing their names--along with many others--on the pages of "Marketing Activities."